United Nations PBC/1 SLE/SR.5

# Peacebuilding Commission

Distr.: General
25 July 2007

Original: English

**First session**
**Sierra Leone configuration**

**Summary record of the 5th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 22 June 2007, at 10 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Majoor ..... (Netherlands)

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07-39135 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda** (PBC/1/SLE/3)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Integrated peacebuilding strategy for Sierra Leone**

2. **The Chairman** drew attention to the document entitled "Sierra Leone Compact", which was based on a framework for cooperation put forward by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone on 9 May. He hoped that discussion of the document would enable the Committee to agree on a time frame and the future steps to be taken for the drafting of an integrated peacebuilding strategy.

3. The Government of Sierra Leone had adopted significant legislation to promote women's and child rights in June. In addition, the Special Court had handed down its first judgement on 20 June, by which three former leaders of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council had been found guilty on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The trial marked the first time that an international tribunal had ruled on the crimes of recruitment of child soldiers and forced marriage in an armed conflict.

4. **Mr. Dumbya** (Sierra Leone), speaking via video link from Freetown, Sierra Leone, said that his Government was grateful to the Commission for the ongoing commitment to sustaining the peace and for helping it to prevent any reversals of the gains made. The Sierra Leone Compact was the outcome of extensive consultations with all the relevant stakeholders and the Government. One issue which should be emphasized was ownership. The people of Sierra Leone assumed direct responsibility for the peace process and sought a strong partnership between the Government and the donor community based on mutual respect and accountability. The Compact was an important milestone on the path towards stability and progress in the country.

5. **Mr. Angelo** (Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone), speaking by video link from Freetown, said that national ownership of any peacebuilding strategy was indeed a critical issue. He noted with satisfaction that the draft Compact built on current national strategies and frameworks, in particular the peace consolidation strategy and the poverty reduction strategy as well as existing analyses of the threats to peace and stability. The Compact was a good opportunity to complement and leverage ongoing peacebuilding efforts. Aid effectiveness and the harmonization of benchmarks were areas requiring further improvement. The commitments set forth in the Improved Governance and Accountability Pact must be fully incorporated in the Compact. Account must also be taken, inter alia, of the forthcoming local elections in 2008, justice and security sector reform, capacity-building and youth employment and empowerment. The current meeting should also address the issue of setting a timetable for the implementation of the peacebuilding objectives set forth in the Compact.

6. **Ms. Gross** (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, commended the efforts to draft the Compact through a process of consultation and welcomed the presence of representatives of civil society and the private sector at the meeting. Her Government encouraged all participants to remain engaged in the drafting process.

7. The Compact addressed many of the relevant peacebuilding priorities but should place greater emphasis on good governance and human rights. All parts of the Compact required further elaboration, particularly the section entitled "Mutual commitments". The Compact must also consider how improvements in infrastructure and delivery of basic services could help to consolidate peace and promote growth.

8. The European Union welcomed the section on tracking and review of progress. The Commission must ensure that the peacebuilding process remained on track and that gaps were addressed in a timely and coherent manner. As the forthcoming elections approached, work on the Compact had rightly slowed down. Although the preparations for the elections took up a large proportion of the institutional resources of the State and Government, the Compact was a key tool for Sierra Leone's peacebuilding process. Work on the document would no doubt resume without delay once a new Government was in place following the elections. Furthermore, ongoing peacebuilding work should continue, including administrative, security sector and judiciary reform. The Commission should continue to facilitate the reforms in all areas of peacebuilding and

identify ways to support Sierra Leone during the forthcoming elections.

9. **Mr. Kodera** (Japan) said that his delegation agreed with the statement in paragraph 5 of the document that the Compact would serve as a political framework to guide the work of the Commission and the Government of Sierra Leone by highlighting key peacebuilding needs, rather than as a programmatic or planning document. It was therefore important to place more emphasis in the document on the importance of establishing a partnership between Sierra Leone and the Commission, which could be done in the preamble under the section entitled "Principles for cooperation". He would like to have a more specific timetable for the adoption of the integrated peacebuilding strategy for Sierra Leone. He also wished to know how various documents, including the United Nations Development Programme country programme document for Sierra Leone and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2008-2010, would be integrated into the strategy.

10. **Mr. Sow** (Guinea) said that his Government welcomed the progress made with the help of the work of the Commission, which showed a commitment by the international community to the peace process in Sierra Leone. His delegation hoped that the Compact could be adopted as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, the subsection entitled "Subregional dimensions of peacebuilding" should be revised in the light of the current situation on the ground. Paragraph 23 stated that the protracted crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and the continued political instability in Guinea constituted potential threats. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire had improved considerably, however. In Guinea, a new Government had been established and reflected a desire among the people for improved political, economic and regional governance. Those changes could contribute to the peacebuilding process in the subregion.

11. **Mr. Asim** (Pakistan) said that his delegation found the Compact to be concise and clear. There were some sections which required further elaboration, especially regarding the commitments of the partners and of the Government itself after the elections. Fortunately, there was sufficient time for good interaction in the field and at Headquarters to finalize the document. Although there had been some time constraints with respect to the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi, the Commission had been able to adopt it. The time remaining before the elections might be used to overcome some of the kinds of difficulties encountered during consideration of the Burundi document, such as questions concerning terminology. He trusted that the Commission would be able to adopt the framework swiftly at the appropriate time.

12. **Mr. Nina** (Brazil) said that the Compact provided a good basis for the involvement of the Commission in the country, as it emphasized the priorities which had been discussed in recent months. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the document referred to existing programmes and activities on the ground. The Commission should avoid duplicating work which had already been done. Rather, there was a need to find ways of maximizing efforts to fill existing gaps and mobilizing the international community to meet the vital needs of Sierra Leone. The role of international partners should be highlighted further in the document.

13. Given that one of the most important aspects of peacebuilding was long-term economic growth, such growth should rank as a peacebuilding priority in the document. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Commission would base its work as far as possible on existing monitoring mechanisms on the ground. It should make every effort to ensure that those mechanisms did not place any additional burden on the Government of Sierra Leone, a point which might be included in the section entitled "Principles for cooperation".

14. **The Chairman** said that the framework for cooperation should focus on ownership by the Government and the leverage function of the peacebuilding strategy. The Commission was continuing to develop the integrated peacebuilding strategy in order to reach prompt agreement on it with the new Government once the elections were over. The Commission would need not only to take account of the results of the elections but also to obtain a commitment to the strategy by the new Government. The Government should therefore be given some time to acquaint itself with the strategy. The Commission was aiming to finalize the strategy by October and would meet at least once in the interim. He intended to hold bilateral consultations with members on the kinds of commitments which the Commission would be entitled to expect.

15. The Commission could consider ways of strengthening the language on partnership in the draft Compact, as suggested by the representative of Japan. There was a need to update the subsection on the subregional dimensions of peacebuilding in the light of the recent developments described by the representative of Guinea. Although there were indeed some issues requiring further elaboration, the Commission must not wait until October to address them.

16. While long-term economic growth was indeed a very important part of development, it was also the main objective of other strategies already in place, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The Commission was looking in particular at the short to medium term and was seeking a comparative advantage in that respect as well as complementarity. The Commission had therefore set forth the existing four priorities in the Compact. Economic growth as such had not been included as a priority objective of the Commission at the current stage.

17. **Mr. Dai** Demao (China) said that his delegation needed more time to study the draft Compact and suggested that, in view of the forthcoming elections in Sierra Leone, the integrated peacebuilding strategy that had been adopted recently by the Commission should be revised to reflect the latest developments on the ground. Recalling that the Commission had recently endorsed the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi, he said that the Sierra Leone configuration should learn from the process that had produced that strategic framework so as to smooth the path of its work.

18. **Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom) said that the draft Compact had identified many relevant priorities for long-term peacebuilding and was a good way to move forward. In that regard, the commitment of the Government of Sierra Leone was essential to the further development of the Compact. Broader consultation in urban and rural areas would also be useful.

19. Specific commitments by the parties involved and a monitoring mechanism were needed to ensure implementation of the Compact. Improvements in infrastructure, the business environment and the delivery of basic services were necessary in order to consolidate peace and facilitate growth.

20. In view of the forthcoming elections, it was to be expected that work on the development of the Compact would slow down. With that in mind, the Commission should wait until a new Government was in place before turning its attention to the details of the Compact. Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone was at an advanced stage, and the key to the effectiveness of the partnership between the Commission and Sierra Leone was how that partnership would complement and build on existing processes. All partners in the peacebuilding process should think carefully about the proper model for engagement so as to add the most value possible.

21. **The Chairman** said that the Commission would be able to ensure the complementarity of efforts because of the full involvement of all partners on the ground. Although there was less pressure to begin implementation than in the case of Burundi, the Commission and its partners nonetheless needed to agree on an implementation strategy relatively soon, particularly in view of the fact that the Commission was approaching the first anniversary of its founding.

22. **Mr. Dumbya** (Sierra Leone) said that, from the beginning, duplication of effort had been a concern and had been the object of much consultation between the Government, the bodies of the United Nations system and donors. As a result, the peacebuilding efforts under way were aimed at strengthening the programmes that had already been developed or addressing any gaps that existed in those programmes; no duplication of work was expected.

23. With respect to efforts aimed at promoting democracy, he noted that concerns had been voiced about the effect that the lack of electricity and the existing water supply might have on the holding of free and fair elections. He assured his country's partners that the Government had made great efforts to address infrastructure problems in cooperation with its bilateral partners. Many of those partners, including China, were engaged in infrastructure improvement projects around the country. The Government had also made great efforts to create an enabling environment for democracy by establishing a commission on political parties registration and by promoting dialogue between the various political parties.

24. **Mr. Cheng** Wenju (China), speaking via video link from Freetown, said that, while external forces could create an enabling environment, the effectiveness of that environment was dependent on internal forces.

Thus, the international community should respect the independent choice of the Government and the people of Sierra Leone by ensuring that its well-intentioned assistance efforts were consonant with the actual long-term needs of the people and focused on helping them achieve self-development. The final outcome of the peacebuilding process should be the complete withdrawal of all assistance.

25. While Sierra Leone was to be highly commended for the progress it had made in reconstruction and the consolidation of peace, it was for the Government to take advantage of the international community's attention in order to overcome the country's disadvantages and realize sustainable and independent development as soon as possible. The low standard of living remained the essential factor affecting peace and stability, and poor infrastructure the biggest factor holding back economic recovery. Since stability and development were intrinsically linked, Sierra Leone would only be able to address high-level issues — justice reform, anti-corruption, youth employment and good governance — by giving priority to economic development and finding a way to meet people's basic needs.

26. China, along with other stakeholders, was prepared to continue its support for Sierra Leone as that country strived to restore its economy and shake off poverty. It would also continue its efforts to produce a suitable peacebuilding framework and would promote stability, economic development and social progress. In that regard, the pressing matter for the international community was to assure that free and peaceful elections would be held.

27. **Mr. Gudmundsson** (World Bank), speaking via video link from Freetown, said that the document before the Commission was a good start and addressed all major issues related to the maintenance of peace and stability. An issue of particular importance to the World Bank was the link between employment and the maintenance of peace. Recalling the study on youth employment the Bank had presented previously, he said that employment was a key factor that would affect the future stability of Sierra Leone.

28. Steady improvement in peoples' lives was the best guarantee of peace. Such improvement was founded on greater productivity and more job opportunities, which, in turn, depended on an improved infrastructure and improved services — issues which the document touched on but did not sufficiently emphasize. Other speakers had raised those same issues in their statements and shared his concern regarding the prominence they should be given as the Commission moved forward.

29. **Ms. Pekuri** (European Commission), speaking via video link from Freetown, supported the statement that had been made by the representative of the World Bank. In view of the forthcoming elections, more thought should be given to the implementation phase of the Compact. The section of the document on mutual commitments needed to be revised so as to ensure that the timetable was realistic and that the Government would be able to fulfil its commitments. For example, it might not be possible to complete reform of the civil service by the end of 2008, given the situation on the ground.

30. With respect to tracking and reviewing progress, any new mechanisms established should be well integrated with existing ones and should not become an additional burden on the Government.

31. **Ms. Pratt** (Network for Collaborative Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone), speaking as the representative of civil society via video link from Freetown, said that it was important to have a political commitment to the implementation of the Compact. It had been the practice in Sierra Leone for incoming Governments not to be bound by commitments undertaken by previous Governments. She therefore suggested that wording should be added in the document calling on the Government that came into power after the elections to commit itself to the implementation of the Compact.

32. There should be special sections within the document for civil-society commitments and for private-sector commitments. The involvement of the private sector was crucial to the sustainability of the project. There ought also to be a clear statement regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the peacebuilding process as well as a special section within the document which addressed ongoing processes and future monitoring and evaluation of programme delivery.

33. The Commission should stress how important it was for donors to fulfil their pledges because there had been many problems in that regard.

34. **Mr. Angelo** (Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone), speaking via video link from Freetown, said that the draft Compact was consistent with UNDAF for Sierra Leone for the period 2008-2010, and that consistency would be maintained going forward. The document was also consistent with the second generation of the poverty reduction strategy paper with regard to many important matters such as subregional dimensions, employment and the creation of a business environment that was conducive to growth. He stressed that the Government and its partners were constantly engaged in peacebuilding activities, particularly in crucial areas such as justice sector reform. The work in Sierra Leone, in fact, had entered the peace consolidation stage, and the task at hand was to create the economic conditions that would help the people and the Government sustain the progress made thus far.

35. **The Chairman**, recalling the comments that had been made by the Chinese delegation and the representative of the World Bank, said that infrastructure and services were extremely important issues, and the Commission must decide what should be done in that regard, since there was a clear link between infrastructure and the priorities identified by the Commission. He would welcome any suggestion, from either the members of the Commission or the participants in Freetown, on ways of drawing attention to the infrastructure issue and moving it forward in a concrete manner.

36. As the representative of the European Commission had said, it was important to ensure the deliverability of commitments. Moreover, any monitoring and review mechanisms created should be embedded into existing ones and care should be taken to avoid imposing further burdens on the Government. Recalling the comments of the representative of the World Bank, he said that the Commission would remain engaged and would follow up the extent of compliance with commitments.

37. **Mr. Doraiswami** (India) said that the importance of the economic dimension should be stressed. The Commission's founding resolution (General Assembly resolution 60/180) mandated it to find ways to marshal resources to implement Government priorities. In the view of his delegation, the link between infrastructure development and stability was clear.

38. Capacity-building, another key area, would help the Government of Sierra Leone to help itself. From the army to the civil service, it was important to look for ways to develop capacity for the Government to administer its own country, which would help to reduce international involvement in the medium to long term.

39. Lastly, it was essential to ensure that the electoral process was in place and to give the new Government resulting from those elections sufficient time to consolidate its efforts.

40. **Mr. Pemagbi** (Sierra Leone) said that some drafting changes could be made in the introduction to the principles for cooperation that would present the situation in a more positive light.

41. **The Chairman** said that, while he did not wish to engage in a drafting session at the current meeting, any suggestions received would be incorporated in the next draft.

42. **Mr. Attiya** (Egypt) said that the emphasis on principles was welcome, and the three issues highlighted in the "Principles for Cooperation" — national ownership, mutual accountability and sustained engagement — represented the pillars for healthy cooperation with Sierra Leone. With regard to the title of the document, it might minimize confusion if it was called a "Strategic Framework", as in the case of Burundi. More stress should be placed on the issue of capacity-building, and the international community must assist the Government of Sierra Leone to build its own institutions. He saw all basic needs as stemming from that issue.

43. The Commission should look into the kind of technical help it could provide to the Government to ensure that the August elections were successful, thereby reinforcing democracy. The mapping of existing activities was also very important in order to identify gaps and areas of additional need, and to that end, close consultation between Headquarters and the field should continue.

44. **The Chairman** said that he found it preferable to stay as close as possible to the language in the resolution in choosing a title for the document.

45. **Ms. Zubcevic** (Croatia) said that the draft sent an excellent signal in anticipation of the elections, showing the commitment of the international community to ensuring that peacebuilding would continue throughout the electoral period. The

participation of the representatives of civil society was also most welcome, and her delegation supported the inclusion of commitments by civil society in the draft.

46. **Mr. Wahab** (Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)) said that the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Islamic Development Bank were already engaged in the development process in Sierra Leone. He endorsed the many comments stressing the importance of respecting national leadership and ownership of the peacebuilding process and the objective of making a real difference on the ground. The OIC would focus its efforts mainly in the areas of capacity-building and youth employment.

47. **Mr. Hull** (United States of America), speaking via video link from Freetown, said that the draft provided an excellent beginning, but noted that it contained no reference to agriculture, the sector which employed the largest number of people in Sierra Leone. Development of the agricultural sector was needed in order to make progress towards food security and growth in exports of cash crops. In fact, the agricultural sector showed the greatest potential for economic growth and youth employment in rural areas; he pointed out that the latest conflict had begun in the rural areas of the country.

48. **Mr. Hilaire** (International Monetary Fund (IMF)), speaking via video link from Freetown, said that the macroeconomic situation in Sierra Leone remained fragile, with an inflation rate of 10 per cent. The fiscal situation was difficult and had resulted in revenue shortfalls. Infrastructure played a part: to cite one example, weak electricity supply affected revenue generation. Fiscal management was critical in the short term, as the country was excessively dependent on external economic flows.

49. **Mr. Dumbya** (Sierra Leone), speaking via video link from Freetown, said that progress on peacebuilding strategies would be hindered if infrastructure was not addressed and basic amenities were not delivered to the people. Therefore, the promised release of funds from the Peacebuilding Fund should take place to enable the Government to perform its functions.

50. **The Chairman**, summarizing the discussion, said that he was pleased at the constructive approach taken to the draft. In addition to the priorities it contained, additional issues including infrastructure, economic growth, agriculture and business development and public sector reform had been mentioned. Linkages between certain sectors, for instance youth employment and agriculture, had also been acknowledged. The advocacy role of the Commission in supporting implementation of the UNDAF and PRSP had also been mentioned. More discussion on the review and monitoring aspects of the draft would be needed in the future. The Commission would continue working on the draft up to the forthcoming elections so that it could discuss strategy with the new Government.

**Update on the preparations for the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held on 11 August 2007**

51. **The Chairman** said that the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone represented a milestone in the consolidation of peace and democracy in the country. Preparations for the elections had been under way for some time, and it was his understanding that the process was on track. In the final period before the elections, it was important for the Commission to be fully supportive of the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone, the United Nations and other stakeholders in ensuring that the elections were conducted in a peaceful, orderly and fair manner. In that spirit, the Security Council had sent a letter to the Peacebuilding Commission on 19 June 2007 requesting it to continue to track progress in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone, in particular in relation to the upcoming elections.

52. **Mr. Dumbya** (Sierra Leone), speaking via video link from Freetown, said that the Government was satisfied with the progress made and was certain that the elections would take place as scheduled. The President of Sierra Leone had bid farewell to Parliament and had committed the Government to respecting democratic principles. He had appealed to all parties to respect the election laws. Parliament, for its part, had been working hard to pass the necessary bills. Party primaries had been held without violence, despite some fears. The Government had taken steps to ensure that they would take place without disruption.

53. **Mr. Angelo** (Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone), speaking via video link from Freetown, said that the nomination process for candidates was on track to begin 26 June; the presidential elections would take place from 3 to 7 July. During the primaries, the political parties had shown commendable political maturity. Interparty

dialogue was continuing, and political party forums had served to enhance confidence among the parties.

54. The overall security situation was good; there had been some localized incidents which had been contained. The role of the police in the election process was commendable, and a plan for election security had been finalized. Financing for the implementation of the plan would be provided through the Peacebuilding Fund. Equipment for the police had been ordered, and they had received specialized training in crowd control. Because of the difficult fiscal situation the Government faced, the National Electoral Commission was to receive $3 million for the next phase of activities, and additional resources were still under discussion. It had conducted a successful voter registration campaign, registering 91 per cent of eligible voters. The next step was the delivery of polling materials to locations throughout the country.

55. The overall atmosphere in the run-up to the elections was positive. The political parties and the media were thus far observing their respective codes of conduct.

56. **The Chairman** asked about funding prospects for the National Electoral Commission.

57. **Mr. Dumbya** (Sierra Leone), speaking via video link from Freetown, said that the Government had set up a special finance committee to collect all taxes due in order to pay the salaries of army officers, and it hoped to use the resulting funds to cover the shortfall in election funding as well. If the results of that effort proved insufficient, it would notify potential donors in a timely manner in order to ensure the holding of elections as free and fair as in the past.

58. **Ms. Reidy** (British High Commission), speaking via video link from Freetown, warned that the credibility and operative capacity of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) could be seriously affected if the anticipated funding did not arrive in time. Elections were resource-intensive; over 30,000 people would be involved in monitoring them and in the important process of voter sensitization. For the first time, voters would be faced with a constituency-based election. A high percentage of the population was illiterate, particularly in rural areas; many young people would be voting for the first time and needed to be informed of the procedures and issues; and the rainy season, which would be well under way by election day, would make it difficult to conduct awareness campaigns in remote regions. Lastly, the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), while an important institution, was weak, and it was important for the people of Sierra Leone to see whether any complaints were properly investigated after the elections.

59. **Mr. Guerts** (Observer for the European Community) said that the European Community wished to confirm its decision to send 80 independent observers, led by a member of the European Parliament, to Sierra Leone in early July 2007 in order to monitor both rounds of the election. The European Community was the largest contributor to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) basket fund (7.5 million euros), in addition to the contributions made by its member countries. The international community should strive to ensure that the election met international standards, but it was also important to focus on the potential polarization of political dialogue in the post-election period.

60. The shortfall in funding for the NEC and the PPRC was disturbing; the international community had contributed 26 million dollars and the Government had committed itself to providing 5 million dollars for NEC salaries not covered by the basket fund. The Government appeared to have the situation well in hand, but the PPRC should continue its monitoring during the coming weeks. Lastly, the Commission should be able to advise the Government on key issues; the draft Chairman's statement sent the right message to all stakeholders.

61. **Ms. Tupou** (Commonwealth Secretariat) said that the Commonwealth Secretariat had provided technical assistance to the NEC and was working to strengthen voter outreach efforts with a focus on gender and disabilities. It would also send observers to the election, and their report would guide its future activities. During a March 2007 visit, it had held a fruitful discussion with all concerned parties, including the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

62. **Mr. Attiya** (Egypt) said that he would not like to see the effort to ensure free and fair elections frustrated because of a lack of funding. Thus far, the Government appeared to be on track, and the international community had the duty to provide any necessary assistance. He therefore proposed that the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund Steering Committee

should consider whether the money already disbursed by the Fund could be used to support the NEC.

63. Lastly, he welcomed the Chairman's draft statement and asked whether it would be adopted as an official document of the Commission.

64. **The Chairman** noted that a number of Commission members were also represented on the Steering Committee and confirmed that the draft statement had been envisaged as an official document.

65. **Mr. Kodera** (Japan) said that the Chairman's draft statement was timely and content-appropriate; it would both raise the international community's awareness of the need to continue to support the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone and show the Government that the international community was genuinely concerned about the nation's future. However, the draft statement should include praise for the Government's efforts and for its partnership with the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) in preparing for the elections.

66. **Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom) said she agreed that the draft statement, which was otherwise excellent, should include praise for the Government. She supported the representative of Egypt's suggestion that the Steering Committee should be asked to consider providing funding to the NEC so that the credibility of the elections would not be undermined. She was pleased that the political parties and the media were adhering to their respective codes of conduct and hoped that they would continue to do so. Voter sensitization, with a focus on women and young people, should be a priority. She hoped that the Commission would provide oversight and guidance for the elections and, to that end, suggested that it should meet during July 2007 to discuss ways of providing practical support.

67. **Mr. Kravchenko** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation fully supported the contents of the draft statement; however, it would be more appropriate to issue it as a Chairman's summary.

68. **Mr. Dai** Demao (China) commended the work of the Government and the relevant United Nations bodies and stressed the need for the Commission to support the election process. He suggested that the Chairman's draft statement should include a reference to the country-specific meeting of the Commission on the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone.

69. **Mr. Asim** (Pakistan) said that he supported the representative of Egypt's suggestion that the Steering Committee should be asked whether resources from the Peacebuilding Fund could be used to support the work of the NEC.

70. He drew attention to a letter dated 19 June 2007 from the President of the Security Council, addressed to the Chairman of the Commission, and suggested that further consideration should be given to ways in which the Commission, as an advisory body, could provide input to the Council and other relevant parties; they, in turn, should be asked to discuss ways of responding to the Commission's recommendations. For example, it would enhance the value of those recommendations if the Council endorsed them.

71. The letter stated that the Security Council would receive another report from UNIOSIL before October 2007 and looked forward to a further input from the Commission at that point; his delegation considered that the Commission should also provide input into the UNIOSIL report and should discuss the reports of the Secretary-General on UNIOSIL.

72. **Mr. Angelo** (Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone), speaking via video link from Freetown, suggested that the Chairman's draft statement should include a commendation of the work of the NEC and the PPRC, and of the Government for fully respecting their constitutional role and facilitating their work.

73. The Steering Committee would meet in a few days, at which time his Government would propose that it should cover half of the shortfall in funding for the NEC with the other half (1.6 million dollars) to be covered by the Peacebuilding Fund.

74. **The Chairman**, speaking in reply to the representative of the Russian Federation, said that the draft statement was not really a summary of the Commission's discussion and noted that the term "statement" might be inappropriate since it suggested the presidential statements issued by the Security Council. Perhaps the draft document should be issued as a declaration. After suggesting a number of drafting changes in response to the concerns expressed by delegations and by the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone, he said he took it

that the Commission wished to adopt the draft document, as amended, as a declaration.

75. *It was so decided.*

76. **Mr. Dumbya** (Sierra Leone), speaking via video link from Freetown, said that he was very pleased with the outcome of the meeting and, in particular, with delegations' commitment to doing their utmost to promote the peacebuilding process and to ensure that the upcoming elections went as well as those of the past.

77. **The Chairman** thanked all the participants in the meeting, including those in Freetown, for an open, fruitful and encouraging discussion that was certain to culminate in the integrated peacebuilding strategy document that they all had in mind. For his part, he was pleased to have contributed the Chairman's Declaration as a sign of encouragement of the ongoing election process. He commended the Government, the relevant United Nations agencies and the international community for their contribution to the success of the elections and expressed the hope that all voters would be able to participate.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*